

Updated: 8:50 a.m. Monday, July 4, 2016 | Posted: 12:00 p.m. Sunday, July 3, 2016



Improved Fairfield fire rating could mean savings

Related

By Michael D. Pitman

Staff Writer

[Follow Michael](#)

[Follow Michael](#)

FAIRFIELD — The Fairfield Fire Department reached a goal this year that it set out to accomplish 15 years ago: an ISO 2 rating.

The second-highest rating from the Insurance Service Office doesn't have much of an impact on how the Fairfield department, or any other department for that matter, operates, but Fairfield fire Chief Don Bennett said the community's property owners benefit the most.

Bennett said the ISO rating "is a valid measurement of a community's ability to provide fire protection," but said "it's simply a guideline."

"There's no way possible somebody could manage a fire department simply based upon meeting these standards because they change so frequently," he said. A perfect score would require the city to do a number of things, including hire more personnel which would cost tax payers more money. Bennett said that's not practical, and a higher score doesn't necessarily meet the needs of the community.

Standards and measurements had changed from its 2010 report to the 2016 report, Bennett said, including the number of points possible in various criteria. He also said in past reports it recommended the city build a fourth fire department, but that's no longer a recommendation.

"I think personally, it has a much larger impact on the rates at which commercial properties pay as opposed to residential. It does have some, but it has very minimal impact on residential homeowners," he said.

Fairfield Development Services Director Tim Bachman said while no one has come in asking about the fire department's ISO rating, he does see it as a hidden economic development benefit for businesses.

"There are those little hidden things that are out there that help businesses and citizenry," said Bachman, including ratings on flood zones which help property owners' flood insurance rates.

Bennett said operating a fire department based on a classification is not practical because circumstances, such as the community needs and budget, need to be taken into consideration when evaluating the details behind a rating. But achieving this ISO rating is a milestone.

Hamilton Fire Chief Steve Dawson, whose department has been at a ISO 2 rating for several years, said Fairfield's rating is "outstanding" to have.

"There are only a few 1's in the country," he said.

Just 2.4 percent of the more than 48,000 departments nationwide have an ISO rating of 2, and less than 0.4 percent have an ISO rating of 1, according to ISO.com. In Ohio, only two departments have an ISO rating of 1 and less than 2 percent have rating of 2.

1 comment